regard with mandatory imprisonment of atleast six months to discourage power thefts going on unabated by the industrialists as well as slum dwellers throughout the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) to (c) The theft of energy is covered under Section 39 of the Indian Electricity Act, 1910. Under this provision, whoever dishonestly extracts/consumes or uses any energy shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years or with fine which shall not be less than Rs. 1000 - or with both. Further, under Section 39A, whosoever attempts to commit or abets an offence punishable under Section 39 shall, notwithstanding anything contained in Section 116 of Indian Penal Code be punished with penalty provided for the offence.

(d) Suggestions have been received for making the provisions relating to theft more stringent. The draft of the new Electricity Bill received from the NCAER, the consultant engaged for this purpose, has more stringent provisions.

**New Guarantee Scheme for Power Projects**

1204 SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the new guarantee scheme for power projects announced by the Prime Minister in Lisbon on 28th June, 2000; and

(b) the response received, if any, from the European countries for bidding in or power generation or transmission companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) and (b) The Prime Minister, in his speech delivered at the India-European Union Business Summit at Lisbon, Portugal on June 27, 2000 announced that the Government is willing to consider a new guarantee structure for large transmission projects and power purchase systems as well as accelerating the international competitive bidding (ICB) process for renovation and modernisation of the country's power generating companies. It is still too early to expect a response.